


State of Maryland
Department of Natural Resources

PERSONAL WATERCRAFT REGULATIONS


Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr., Governor
Michael S. Steele, Lt. Governor
C. Ronald Franks, Secretary
William P. Jensen, Deputy Secretary




State of Maryland
Department of Natural Resources
Natural Resources Police
1804 West Street, Suite 300
Annapolis, MD 21401
410-260-3280
Toll Free 1-877-620-8367
www.dnr.state.md.us




A person may not operate or give permission to operate a PWC in excess of idle speed in any water of the State less than 18 inches in depth.




If you were born after July 1, 1972, you must carry a certificate of boating safety education.




A Coast Guard approved personal flotation device must be worn by everyone on board.




You can only operate between the hours of sunrise and sunset.




Your vessel must be equipped with a self-circling device or engine cut-off switch which must be worn by the operator of the craft at all times.



You cannot operate at a speed greater than 6 knots when within 100 feet of another PWC, other boats, a wharf, pier, piling, shoreline, bridge structure, abutment or people in the water.



In Maryland waters of the Atlantic Ocean, you cannot operate within 300 feet of people in the water, surf fishing activities or at a speed greater than 6 knots within 100 feet of vessels, wharfs, jetties or piers.



Negligent operation is not permitted.

Superintendent's Message:

Personal Watercraft, often called Jet Skis or Wave Runners, are the fastest growing form of boating in Maryland and across the United States. They are comparatively cheap to buy, easily transported and fun to ride. Along with the positives attributes comes serious responsibility, so: **KNOW BEFORE YOU GO!**

As Superintendent of the Natural Resources Police, I am a great believer in carefully studying the boating laws in order to become a more knowledgeable and responsible boater. By studying this flier, you will have a safer and more enjoyable experience. Remember, safety is everyone's job.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Douglas DeLeaver".

Colonel Douglas DeLeaver, Superintendent

Personal Watercraft (PWC) are an increasingly popular recreational vessel on Maryland waters. They are classified by the United States Coast Guard as a "Class A Vessel", which is a motorboat less than 16 feet in length. Inexperienced operators may not always recognize potential dangers and consequently are involved in a high percentage of accidents.

Ride Responsibly

**PRACTICE COMMON SENSE
AND COURTESY AND
PLAY IT SAFE ON ALL
WATERWAYS IN MARYLAND
AND ACROSS THE COUNTRY!**

Rules & Regulations

To improve and promote safe and responsible boating on the state's waterways, the Natural Resources Police enforces the PWC regulations explained in this brochure. It is important for you to read and understand these regulations before operating a PWC.



Maryland law requires the operator of a PWC to be at least 16 years of age. Also, anyone born after July 1, 1972 must carry a certificate of boating safety education.



In Maryland waters other than the Atlantic Ocean, PWC cannot operate at a speed greater than 6 knots within 100 feet of other boats, piers, pilings, bridge structures, shoreline, wharfs, people in the water or other PWC.



You may not operate a PWC in any of the following negligent manners:

- JUMPING, OR ATTEMPTING TO JUMP THE WAKE OF ANOTHER VESSEL WITHIN 100 FEET OF THAT VESSEL;
- RIDING BACKWARDS AND/OR STANDING ON THE SEAT OF THE CRAFT WHILE RIDING;
- WEAVING THROUGH AND RECKLESSLY OPERATING IN AREAS OF CONGESTION;
- SPEEDING IN RESTRICTED AREAS SUCH AS MARINAS, NO WAKE ZONES, ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE AREAS; OR
- OPERATING IN A MANNER THAT ENDANGERS THE LIFE, LIMB OR PROPERTY OF ANY PERSON, INCLUDING THE OPERATOR. (I.E. SPLASHING OTHER PWC OR SWIMMERS, BUZZING PIERS AND OTHER BOATERS, ETC.)



A person may not operate or give permission to operate a PWC in excess of idle speed in any water of the State less than 18 inches in depth.



PWC cannot operate between the hours of sunset and sunrise.



When towing a water skier, you must have a three-person craft with a rear-facing observer who is at least twelve years of age.



When operating a PWC in Maryland waters of the Atlantic Ocean, you may not operate or give permission to operate a PWC within 300 feet of surf fishermen or people in the water or, at a speed greater than 6 knots within 100 feet of vessels, wharfs, jetties, shoreline or piers.



An individual may not operate or give permission to operate a PWC registered in the State of Maryland unless a regulation sticker approved by the Department of Natural Resources is properly attached to the PWC.



Boating under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol impairs judgement, motor skills and concentration. It is also a violation of state law. **JUST DON'T DO IT!**

DEEP CREEK LAKE:

In addition to these regulations, if you operate a PWC on Deep Creek Lake in Garrett County, Maryland, you are subject to certain restrictions. Please contact Deep Creek Lake Recreation Area at (301) 387-4111 for more information.

Safety Equipment

Required by Maryland Law

PERSONAL FLOATATION DEVICE

Each person on board a PWC must wear a US Coast Guard approved type I, II, III or V life jacket and it must be size-specific for the wearer.

KILL SWITCH LANYARD

All PWC must be equipped with a functioning self-circling device, or a lanyard-type engine cut-off switch that must be attached to the operator, the operator's clothing or the operator's life jacket.

SOUND PRODUCING DEVICE

A whistle or horn must be carried on board a PWC in order to make the sound signals required by the rules of the road.

FIRE EXTINGUISHER

All PWC must have an approved B-1 fire extinguisher that is in working order.

OTHER MARYLAND REQUIREMENTS

All PWC must be registered with the Department of Natural Resources and must appropriately display the registration numbers and validation decals.

Important Facts About PWC

PWC have no brakes.

Allow long distances for stopping.

No Throttle - no steerage.

You must maintain some throttle to maneuver.

Remember the 100 foot rule.

Most PWC accidents are collisions.
Stay at least 100 feet from everything.

Avoid tunnel vision.

Don't just look forward, continually look to both sides and behind while riding.



PERSONAL WATERCRAFT PRE-RIDE CHECKLIST

CHECK THROTTLE CONTROL - Check operation of throttle lever. Make sure it returns to the fully closed position when released.

SAFETY LANYARD - Check safety stop lanyard to insure engine will shut off when lanyard is removed.

FUEL - Make sure you have sufficient fuel

FUEL PRESSURE - Loosen filler cap to relieve any pressure, then tighten cap securely.

CHECK FOR FUEL LEAKS & VENTILATE ENGINE COMPARTMENT - Open engine cover for several minutes.

STEERING - Check to insure steering is functional. Insure that thrust nozzle moves in response to turning of steering handlebars.

CLEAN PUMP & DRAIN BILGE - Clear jet pump and drive shaft of any foreign substances.

CHECK FOR HULL DAMAGE

FIRE EXTINGUISHER - Make sure the extinguisher is fully charged and up to date.

CHECK HOSE CONNECTIONS - Make sure all connections, bolts, nuts, and fasteners are secure and tight.



The facilities and services of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources are available to all without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, national origin or physical or mental disability.

This document is available in alternative format upon request.

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